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## FRENCH INSISTENCE

OUT OF the European welter there is one nation with a definite policy; that nation is France. Since the Armistice, the French policy has been lucidly clear. The French wish their destroyed property replaced, and they want security. The French mine-owner or manufacturer who lost his property because of the destructions of war has received nothing from Germany. The moneys paid by Germany have been spent upon armies of occupation, salaries of officials, and the like. The hard-headed Frenchman, and most Frenchmen are hard-headed, grants that Europe is in a sad mess. He recognizes that there is a possibility that European States may never be able to pay their debts. He realizes that there are man-made trade barriers all over Europe; that there are divergencies of policy, fears and hates. He realizes that all the people of Europe are war-weary, and that the great need is for peace and opportunity. But France realizes that, while England's budget is balanced, she, the worst sufferer of the war, has a large deficit. She realizes that she has one-third the birth-rate of Germany. Her people are thrifty, economical, prosperous, busy now, as always; but she is heavily in debt, and there are no guarantees of security except her army. Payment and security, these are the things upon which France insists.

Among the people who know the facts—the number, we fear, is not large—there are two schools of thought: One school argues that France should agree to a moratorium—that is to say, to a suspension of payments from Germany, that this suspension of payments may have to be extended over a number of years; that only by such method can Germany re-establish herself and arrive at any financial stability; that at the expiration of, say, four or five years, Germany would be in position to pay interest and amortizement; that if such a breathing spell is not granted to Germany, France will never receive payment; that therefore France, in her own interest, should be lenient with Germany. This is substantially the English opinion.

The French reply to this position is that it is erroneous. She has granted moratoriums before. Instead of the influence being for the improvement of German finance, it has been quite the contrary. Nothing in her relations with Germany, she argues, warrants her in believing that at the expiration of a moratorium Germany will be any more ready to pay than now. From the facts which she has at hand, she is convinced that Germany will make use of any breathing spell to make payments to France impossible. A special cable to the *New York Times*, under date of October 16, states that

French bankers claim that twenty billion marks have been sent abroad by Germany beyond the reach of taxes; that German manufacturers leave abroad as large a part as possible of current receipts from industry and shipping, frequently depositing their payments in foreign banks. The French believe that the Germans do not want any loan to help toward the payment of reparations, and quote from German papers to prove the point. The French argue, therefore, that there is no use dealing gently with Germany.

The French are convinced that Germany is preparing for another war with France. They say that it will come in from eight to ten years. France realizes that Germany has a population of sixty millions, which population is rapidly increasing. She realizes that her own population is less than forty millions, and less than it was in 1911. The French insist, therefore, that they must be protected against the attacks of Germany. No one else offers her protection; she must protect herself. She insists, therefore, upon an army along the Rhine. The French do not feel that they can be justly accused of militarism. They have the power to march into the Ruhr district at any moment. They have not entered that section; therefore, they argue, they are not a grasping nation. Important Frenchmen told us during our stay in Paris this summer that if anybody, such as England and Italy, the League of Nations, or Holland and Switzerland, or any other group, would place an army of 100,000 men between France and Germany, France would disband her armies at once. A people willing to do that, it was pointed out, cannot be properly called militaristic. France, they said, wishes peace; to be let alone. She is not seeking anything that belongs to others. She does not propose that others shall despoil her. If others will not help her, she purposes to help herself. Payment and protection—France insists upon these things. It will serve no purpose to threaten France. The French are not easily scared. The French policy is fixed. She will defend that policy against all comers.

These are facts to be considered, as we go forth to establish peace.

There is nothing to be gained by charging France with being militaristic, bent upon dominating Europe. There is nothing to be gained by accusing her of planning the destruction of Germany. None of these flings are true. French policy is much simpler. The clearest, most openly proclaimed policy in Europe is French policy. Some reimbursement for losses; security. These are the things upon which France insists. Why shouldn't she have them?